

Epicurus' Birthday 2023 - (The Most Comprehensive Picture Yet!)

Post by "Don" of November 29, 2022 at 5:09 PM

@Nate :

καὶ τῇ μητρὶ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, καὶ ἡμῖν εἰς τὴν εἰθισμένην ἄγεσθαι γενέθλιον ἡμέραν ἐκάστου ἔτους τῇ προτέρᾳ δεκάτῃ τοῦ Γαμηλιῶνος, ὡσπερ καὶ εἰς τὴν γινομένην σύνοδον ἐκάστου μηνὸς ταῖς εἰκάσι τῶν συμφιλοσοφούντων ἡμῖν εἰς τὴν ἡμῶν τε καὶ Μητροδώρου <μνήμην> κατατεταγμένην. Usener (*Epicurea*, 405) was distressed but undaunted: ‘an Epicurus die vii natus quod die x susceptus erat, hunc potius diem celebrabat?’, on which Jacoby (on the fragment) only commented that, if this were so, it was a puzzle how Apollodorus knew the true birthday.¹ The trouble is delusory. Though Usener (cf. *Rh. Mus.* xxxiv [1879] 425) thought that the προτέρᾳ δεκάτῃ was the 10th, it was in fact the 20th (see, e.g., Meritt, *The Athenian Year*, 46, *T.A.P.A.* xcv [1964], 208 n. 27), which is a long way from the 7th. There were celebrations every month on the 20th, but in Gamelion there were special birthday celebrations and the ἐναγίσματα as well. I take it that Epicurus was encouraged to vary his description of the 20th because ταῖς εἰκάσι looked less uncomfortably singular than τῇ προτέρᾳ δεκάτῃ. Why did Apollodorus have a different view? The regrettable answer is that he did not. ἐβδόμη is Huebner’s conjecture. Long’s apparatus gives: ἐβδόμη B^{pc}: ἐβδόμης FP: om. B^{ac}. (But see Usener’s apparatus on B, *Epicurea*, 366.) Gamelion is the seventh month of the Attic year and the numeral is a gloss.

Apollodorus is now known to have given dates by month and day only for Socrates (F 34) and Plato (F 37), successive days, with religious connections, and mythical, according to Wilamowitz (*Aristoteles und Athen*, i. 190), and by month only otherwise for Boethos (F 53).

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From Lewis, "Two Days" (1969)

I'm digging into all the citations and references.